# MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
# STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

## S2024-SR5

# (Amended) Resolution Regarding A Student Referendum on Solidarity with Gaza

May 3, 2024
Amended May 5, 2024

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**Sponsor:** Unanimously sponsored by The Middlebury College Student Government Association Senate

**Authors:** Kate Lawson, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Ariana Troutman, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Abeera Riaz, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Daniel Schroeder, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Kathleen Schroeder, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; At least 15 others from the Solidarity Encampment who prefer to remain anonymous

**Whereas**, Middlebury College's mission statement asserts its commitment to "grappl[ing] with challenging questions about themselves and the world, [and also] foster[ing] the inquiry, equity, and agency necessary for [students] to practice ethical citizenship at home and far beyond our Vermont campus";

**Whereas**, Middlebury's Conflict Transformation Collaborative "has made a commitment to serve as an incubator for research, teaching, and student experiences to address divisiveness," divisiveness of which there is no higher form than apartheid;

**Whereas**, the Middlebury Land Acknowledgement asserts that "[w]e are all one in the sacred web of life that connects people, animals, plants, air, water, and earth," yet the college remains silent on the ecocide of Palestinian land, while claiming that "colonialism is a current and ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation";

**Whereas,** Middlebury has led its peer institutions in ethical financial practices, namely in its historic divestment from fossil fuels in 2019 and from South African apartheid in 1981;

**Whereas**, in January 2024 Middlebury's Student Government Association unanimously passed a motion calling on Middlebury to divest from war profiteering;

**Whereas**, the Middlebury's Handbook states: "that members of its community have the essential right to freely speak, hear, write, challenge, and argue, and to pursue questions of their choice using methods, sources and approaches of their choice. Middlebury accepts an institutional obligation to resolutely defend and protect this right for all members of its communities, even when doing so admits inquiry and speech that some may find offensive," which includes student, staff, and faculty expressions of pro-Palestine views.

**Therefore,** be it resolved…

**That,** a referendum be held to vote on the following requests directed to Middlebury College administration and Board of Trustees, open to the student body until midnight on Thursday, May 9th. The referendum language and content are added in Appendix I.

1. Commit to **full financial transparency** on all current and future investments.
2. **Divest** the endowment of all holdings in companies that engage in **arms manufacturing** on all current and future investments.
3. **Divest** the endowment of all holdings in companies that engage in **war profiteering** on all current and future investments.
4. **Divest** the endowment of all holdings in companies that engage in **any Israeli businesses** on all current and future investments.

**S2024-SR5: Resolution Regarding A Student Referendum on Solidarity with Gaza**

**Respectfully submitted,**

Kate Lawson, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Ariana Troutman, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Abeera Riaz, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Daniel Schroeder, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; Kathleen Schroeder, Gaza Solidarity Encampment; At least 15 others from the Solidarity Encampment who prefer to remain anonymous

**Vote Count: 10-0-0**
In favor: 10
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 0
Absent: 1

**Amendment Vote Count: 11-0-0**
In favor: 11
Opposed: 0
Abstained: 0
Absent: 0

The following was amended due to recent developments regarding the ongoing negotiation between the encampment representatives and the administration:

- The deadline was extended to Thursday 11:59pm instead of Wednesday 11:59pm
- The initial requests were:

    1. **Divest** the endowment of all holdings in companies that engage in war profiteering, committing to **full financial transparency** on all its current and future investments.
    2. **Uphold** the right to free expression by enshrining in policy a commitment to **protect all** faculty, staff (including public safety, facilities, and administration), and students who express support for Palestinian liberation. This includes protection from retribution, specifically including protection of employment. Extend **full amnesty** to all protesters and supporters calling for these demands.
    3. **Provide transparency** on why we use **external programs**, namely the Israel Institute, for the Modern Hebrew and Israeli Society minor rather than hold the same standards, funding, and resources as other Middlebury departments.
    4. **Cultivate** direct **affiliations** with Palestinian academic and cultural institutions, and following Northwestern's Agreement on Deering Meadow, **commit** to opening a pathway to help Gazan students come study at Middlebury.
    5. Release a public statement calling for a **ceasefire** in Gaza.

- Some materials were removed from the appendix as considered irrelevant with the recent amendments.

# Appendix

## I. Referendum Language and Content

[The referendum will be administered through Google Forms. It should not require name or student ID number but should require access through Middlebury email, as to prevent multiple votes from a singular individual and verify active status as undergraduate students of Middlebury College. Although emails will be collected for verification purposes, anonymity will be preserved and responses will be confidential]

**Why a Referendum?** This referendum seeks to gauge students' opinions on the requests of the Gaza Solidarity Encampment. The Solidarity Encampment believes that these requests are critical to creating a campus culture committed to ending all forms of oppression. We encourage students to read the Appendix of the resolution to learn more about the Gaza Solidarity Encampment's requests.

Would you support the following changes to Middlebury College as outlined in SR5:

1. Commit to **full** **financial transparency** on all current and future investments.
   Yes
   No
   I do not intend to vote

2. **Divest** the endowment of all holdings in companies that engage in **arms manufacturing** on all current and future investments.
   Yes
   No
   I do not intend to vote

3. **Divest** the endowment of all holdings in companies that engage in **war profiteering** on all current and future investments.
   Yes
   No
   I do not intend to vote

4. **Divest** the endowment of all holdings in companies that engage in **any Israeli businesses** on all current and future investments.
   Yes
   No
   I do not intend to vote

## II. Divestment and Financial Transparency

In this document, The Gaza Solidarity Encampment explains the necessity for transparency regarding Middlebury's endowment. In this document, The Gaza Solidarity Encampment outlines the explanation for divestment from Israeli businesses. The Gaza Solidarity Encampment outlines the need for a written policy stating Middlebury's plan to divest from war profiteering. Here is an additional source explaining steps Middlebury could take: Plan for Divesting from War-Profiteering Companies.